

## Public Service Announcement

### Know the Facts to Avoid Swimmer's Itch

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As summer's heat sets in and more and more people seek the comfort of a cool dip in the lake or a pond, there is an increased likelihood for swimmer's itch to occur. Swimmer's itch is a skin rash caused by a parasite commonly found in fresh water lakes and ponds that are visited by waterfowl. It develops when cercarial larvae burrow into the skin and die. Small reddish spots form on the body within hours after exposure and will itch intensely for several days before subsiding.

Reduce the risk of swimmer's itch by following these recommendations:

- Avoid areas where swimmer's itch is a known problem or where signs have been posted warning of unsafe water.
- Avoid swimming near or wading in warm, shallow areas where snails are present.
- Shower or vigorously towel dry immediately after getting out of the water.

Most cases of swimmer's itch do not require medical attention. If you have a rash, try the following for relief:

- topical steroid cream
- cool compresses
- baking soda paste to the rash
- Calamine lotion
- colloidal oatmeal baths

For more information on swimmer's itch, visit the Health Topics A to Z section of the Centers For Disease Control and Prevention's web site at [www.cdc.gov/health/diseases.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/health/diseases.htm)

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